129-11

Typed 1/23/81

J.F.K. Assassination Investigation
Acoustics Research

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JAN 26 1981

The Director
Federal Bureau of Investigation

Robert L. Keuch
Special Counsel to the
Attorney General

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This is to confirm a series of telephonic discussions between Mr. Jeffrey Fogel of my staff and F.B.I. Special Agents [redacted] regarding the Department's continuing efforts to assist the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) in the NAS evaluation of acoustical evidence related to the John F. Kennedy assassination. As we have discussed with those agents, the NAS has requested that F.B.I. Technical Services Division personnel who are familiar with the recent F.B.I. technical review of House Select Committee on Assassinations (HSCA) acoustical research respond to questions at the next meeting of the NAS panel which is reviewing that acoustical evidence.

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Attendance at this NAS panel meeting will be restricted to NAS members and staff, National Science Foundation staff, and scientific experts invited by NAS (including the private-sector researchers hired by the HSCA). The Department of Justice has taken numerous precautions, such as the use of the National Science Foundation as a "buffer" between the NAS and the Department, to avoid both the reality of and the appearance of Department intervention in the NAS study. To preserve the lack of direct contact between NAS panel members and the Department of Justice, I have instructed my staff not to attend this meeting. My staff remains unaware of the identity of the NAS panel members and has dealt with the NAS only through a single NAS professional staff member.

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cc: Records ✓
Gen. Litigation
Mr. Fogel
Mr. Keuch

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The Department has also attempted to supply all requested support services and information to the NAS, to assure that its conclusions will not be incomplete as a result of its lack of access to relevant information. Accordingly, it is requested that the F.B.I. arrange to have the appropriate F.B.I. personnel attend the NAS panel meeting on Saturday, January 31, 1981 in room 150 of the NAS Building at 2101 Constitution Avenue, N.W.

Although Technical Services Division personnel have informed my office that some matters cannot be discussed with NAS panel members if private-sector experts are present, I believe that it would be extremely inappropriate for any component of the Department to request or encourage the exclusion of other invited experts from any portion of that meeting. I base this opinion upon my understanding that much of the F.B.I. presentation will be critical of the research effort of the other experts present. A Department-endorsed exclusion of those experts could generate public doubt regarding the ability of the F.B.I. to support its widely-publicized acoustics report.

In regognition of the possibility that F.B.I. experts' answers to some NAS panel questions may contain technical methodology information which should not be released to commercial researchers in the private sector, it is requested that the answers to such questions be withheld if essential at that meeting and that those answersnbe subsequently submitted to the NAS in written form. This procedure will also assure the maintenance of a record of Department contact with the NAS committee. If national security, grand jury secrecy, Freedom of Information Act, Privacy Act, or other legal considerations bar a complete response to any NAS question, it is requested that your personnel advise the National Academy of Sciences panel that the problem will be immediately referred to my office. My staff will endeavor to arrange a lawful method of releasing to the NAS any such information sought.

It is our understanding that only NAS panel members will question F.B.I. personnel. Questions should be restricted to matters relevant to the evaluation of scientific evidence. Neither F.B.I. investigative activity which was not related to the scientific evidence nor Criminal Division involvement in reviewing

the HSCA report should be the subject of inquiry at the NAS meeting. It is understood that F.B.I. personnel have only been requested to bring whatever laboratory notes or other resources which will assist them in responding to scientific questions related to the acoustical evidence and to all aspects of the recent F.B.I. scientific report regarding that evidence.

The cooperation of the F.B.I. in this matter is appreciated. The Department's consistent and open cooperation with the NAS should facilitate the completion of an independent study of the acoustical evidence in this matter which the Department and the general public can rely upon without hesitation.

[redacted] [redacted]